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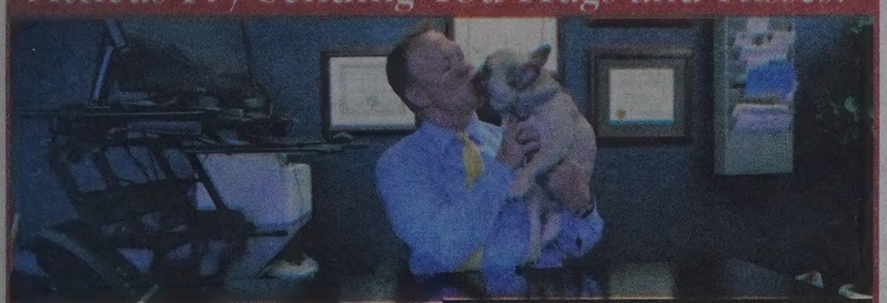

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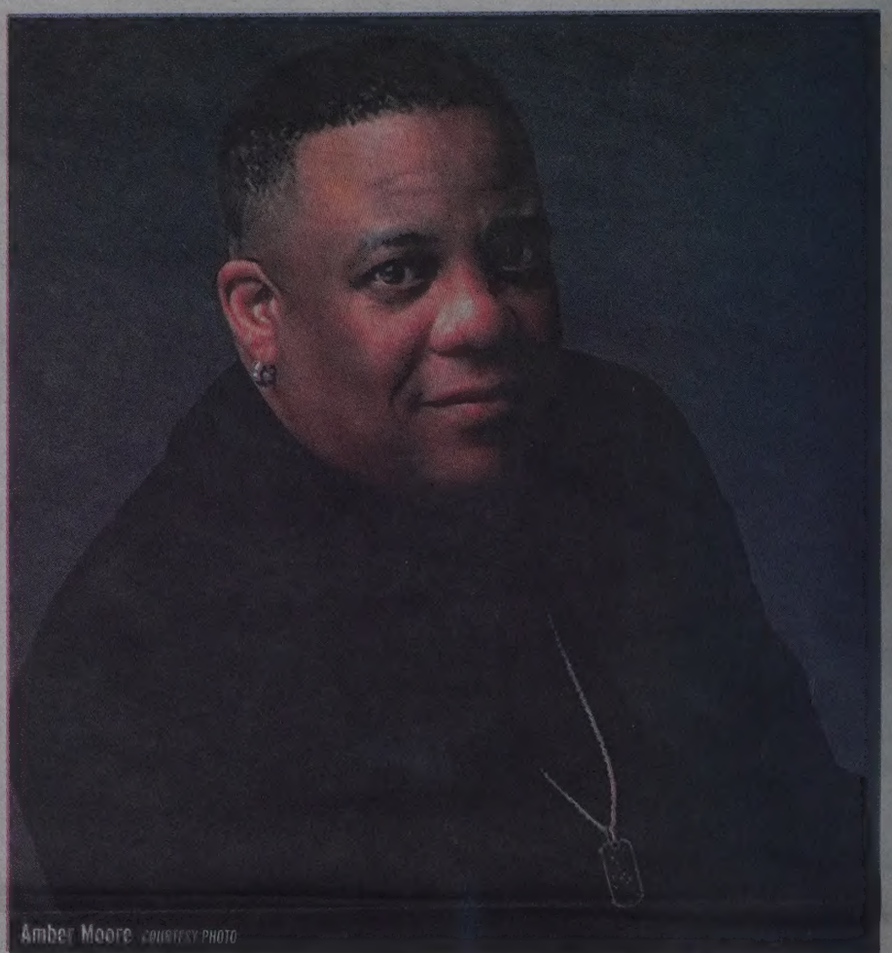
Amber Moore

TALKS COMMUNITY BUILDING AND ATLANTA BLACK PRIDE


Amber Moore COURTESY PHOTO

Katie Burkholder

No one embodies Black Gay Pride quite like Amber Moore. The multihyphenate community organizer wears many hats, all dedicated to serving the LGBTQ community and creating a space where everyone, especially Black and brown folks, sees themselves and gets the education and resources they need. We recently sat down with Moore to discuss her involvement with Atlanta Black Pride and In The Life Atlanta, how her work has influenced her understanding of her others' identities and her own, and the importance of building community over Atlanta Black Pride weekend.

Quotes have been edited for clarity.

To start, tell me about yourself.

Currently, I wear three hats in the LGBTQ community. I am a founder of Sigma Omega Phi Fraternity, which is the only collegiate LGBTQ fraternity or sorority in the United States that's on campus. I run as President and founder at this time. I also wear the hat as executive director for Real Bois Talk, a program that came out of the Health Initiative that is now a nonprofit on its own. It is for African American masculine-identified gay females' health disparities and wellness. My third hat is Atlanta Black Pride. I've been on the board for In The Life Atlanta since 2013. In The Life Atlanta is the original organization behind Atlanta Black Pride weekend.

> *"Because I'm a masculine female, I've been able to embrace more of my masculinity and feel comfortable with who I am, but I've also been able to help others get there."*

Between 2015 and 2017, In The Life's president Ricky Smith had the vision to take In The Life Atlanta to a foundation level and pull the program of Atlanta Black Pride Weekend [to make it] an entity that can stand on its own with the backing of the In The Life Atlanta foundation. I became the COO and Vice President of Atlanta Black Pride. I go out and talk to our sponsors, I make sure our programs and events are all in place, I also do some of the year-round programming. I'm the day-to-day person.

To go back a little bit, how did you first become involved with In The Life?

Because I was a part of the Rush Center, I did work for the Atlanta Pride Committee under James Sheffield and Buck Cooke, and I worked for the Health Initiative as the program manager of Real Bois Talk at the time. I was in the mix of everything. When my job changed at APC, I realized I still liked doing the festival kind of stuff, so I joined in with Atlanta Black Pride ... They said they had board positions and I interviewed for it.

For the first three years, I was a seat warmer. I was doing my [Black masculine LGBTQ women brunch] event during Atlanta Black Pride, I was very much working on that. Then I was like, 'It's time for me to step up.' So that's how I became [COO].

Amazing. You're obviously incredibly involved with the LGBTQ community, so to shift to your personal journey, how did you get to this point of involvement? How has your identity manifested and changed because of this work?

Because I'm a masculine female, I've been able to embrace more of my masculinity and feel comfortable with who I am, but I've also been able to help others get there. It's not so much that our programming is for Black lesbians who are masculine. [Through this work], I've been able to better understand the transgender community, my gay male community, my bisexual community. Because of being in this role, my knowledge has become broader. I'm not transgender, I'm not bisexual, but I carry them with me. So, I make sure that I get as much of my own personal education. I'm interested to know because I want to serve that community in the best light I can.

It also gave me an understanding of what kind of education we as Atlanta Black Pride are responsible for giving to the community — and I don't mean just the Black and Brown LGBTQ community, but our community as a whole. For us, we're looking at the fact that when it comes to the Black and Brown LGBTQ community, we're not getting the resources, education opportunities, and other things that our white counterparts are.

If I can connect one small business to get exposure, if I can put a podcast out there, if there's an artist that I can put on my stage and give them more opportunities, that's my joy right there. When we put a stage together, the people we put on that stage are us. I want you to be in my community.

To learn more about Atlanta Black Pride, visit atlantablackpride.org.

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SUNDAY

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SUNDAY

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MONDAY

Labor Day Party with
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ATLANTA BLACK PRIDE WEEKEND CALENDAR

Katie Burkholder

Atlanta Black Pride weekend is just around the corner. Over Labor Day weekend, Atlanta's Black LGBTQ and allied community gathers for a weekend of support, love, and fun in one of the largest Black Pride celebrations in the country. Check out the weekend's event lineup and start filling your calendar now! ***Find the full calendar online at thegavoice.com.***

Joseline Hernandez performs at this year's Pure Heat Community Festival PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

Pride Multifaith Celebration

August 30, 7pm

Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta

Led by Bishop Sonya Williams, religious and spiritual leaders in the community Rev. Jean Bell, Rev. Dr. David Alexander, Bishop Elect Troy Sanders, Imanma Katrina Jackson, Rev. Nadine Rawls, Rabbi Nechemyah D. Sullivan, and Pastor Maressa Pendermon as well as Councilwoman Keisha Waites and ViiV Healthcare will provide inspiration and a blessing over the weekend with this non-denominational service.

3rd Annual Mayor's Atlanta Black Pride Weekend Reception

September 1, 7pm to 9pm

Location Provided Upon RSVP

Mayor Andre Dickens is proud to host the upcoming 3rd Annual Mayor's Black Pride Reception, powered by Gilead Sciences. Join Mayor for an evening of celebration and entertainment, as we kick off Black Pride weekend. Tickets are complimentary, and all guests are invited to make a donation to the Mayor's Youth Scholarship Program. *RSVP through Eventbrite.*

Atlanta Black Pride Weekend Influencers Dinner

September 2, 6pm to 10pm

The Starling

An evening to highlight and honor trailblazers and role models who influence the LGBTQ community, this semi-formal event includes a cocktail reception, live entertainment, recognition ceremony, a four-course meal, and more. *Purchase tickets at atlantaprideweekend.com/influencer-dinner.*

Equality and Unity Welcome Reception

September 2, 6pm to 9pm

Atlanta City Hall

You're invited to attend the 2022 Inaugural Equality and Unity Pride Reception hosted by Atlanta City Councilmember Keisha Waites! The purpose of the Equality and Unity Pride reception is to celebrate diversity, promote equality, unity, and recognize the work and contributions of LGBTQ pioneers, trailblazers and community leaders. *Register through Eventbrite.*

Atlanta Black Pride Signature Fashion Show

September 2, 7pm to 9pm

120 Ralph McGill Blvd

This fashion show will feature local designers The Thrift Jesus, Her Love Clothing, Kodak Kelz, and Kings Thread. *Learn more at atlantablackpride.org.*

Atlanta Black Pride Celebration

September 2, 9pm to 2am

2001 MLK

Mark Gregory, Keisha Waites, and Gold Space Atlanta present a 2022 Black Gay Pride celebration along with Gold Space Atlanta. Join them along with Comedian Dee Mahoney and DJ Carlos Seaborne. *Get your tickets through Eventbrite.*

Speakfire Erotic Poetry

September 2, 11:30pm

120 Ralph McGill Blvd

LGBTQ and allied poets are encouraged to share poetry about sensuality, intimacy, and eroticism. Doors at 11 pm. *Learn more at atlantablackpride.org.*

Literary Café

September 3, 2pm to 5pm

120 Ralph McGill Blvd

All LGBTQ authors are invited to this literary café to sell their books. *Learn more at atlantablackpride.org.*

One Sweet Night LGBTQ Adult Prom

September 3, 4pm to 8pm

The Dawn Event Center

If you missed prom, or weren't able to be your authentic self, or you'd like another opportunity to do it all again, join Iana Skye for the 3rd annual LGBTQ adult prom. Enjoy an evening of food, music, dancing, and mingling in a safe, affirming, and accessible atmosphere with gender neutral restrooms available for all. This year's theme is LGBTQ Royalty. *Get your tickets through Eventbrite.*

Ladies at Play's SaturDAY Party Bash

September 3, 5pm to 9pm

Tongue & Groove

Ladies at Play is celebrating Atlanta Black Gay Pride 2022 with a dash of old and a splash of new! DJ NUTTY is back by popular demand spinning old school and new school hip hop, club bangers, R&B, house and much more! *Get your tickets through Eventbrite.*

The Trans Life Awards

September 3, 5pm to 7pm

Location TBD

The Trans Life Awards honors the unselfish contributions of members of the transgender and non-binary communities in Atlanta. *For more information, visit thetranslifeawards.com.*

All White Party

September 3, 10pm to 3am

Hidden Gem

This 30+ party is for mature women who love women. Party the night away with DJ Bombshell Boogie. *Get your tickets through Eventbrite.*

Kirkwood Presents Dick Camp

September 3, 10pm to 3am

DA City Hookah Café

Hosted by Brian Greyson, this party will feature entertainers Knock Out and Black Diamond and DJ Ricoveli. *Get your tickets through Eventbrite.*

LGBTQ Food and Wine Festival

September 4, 11am to 8pm

Central Park

This food and wine event will feature cooking demonstrations, artisans and lifestyle vendors, live entertainment, and delicious cuisine from Atlanta's best LGBTQ- and ally-owned restaurants. *Tickets are $50, to purchase visit lgbtfw.com/festival-tickets.*

Pure Heat Community Festival

September 4, Noon to 8pm

Piedmont Park

This free community festival is one of the largest Black LGBTQ events in the country, fostering communication, tolerance, and mutual support among the LGBTQ community. This year's entertainment lineup includes Joseline Hernandez. *Learn more at pureheatcommunityfestival.com.*

BLK Gay Pride Day Party

September 4, 3pm to 10pm

Energy Daiquiri Bar

This red-hot day party will feature DJ Mikeith and special guests Hype Man Ant and Erotic Barber. *Get your tickets at kirkwoodenterprisesllc.com.*

Atlanta Black Pride Park Festival

September 4-5, 2pm to 7pm

Central Park

The 25th Atlanta Black Pride Park Festival is a two-day free outdoor festival featuring live music on two stages, a drag show, arts, food, and more! *More info at atlantablackpride.org.*

Booze Cruise

September 5, Noon

Lake Lanier

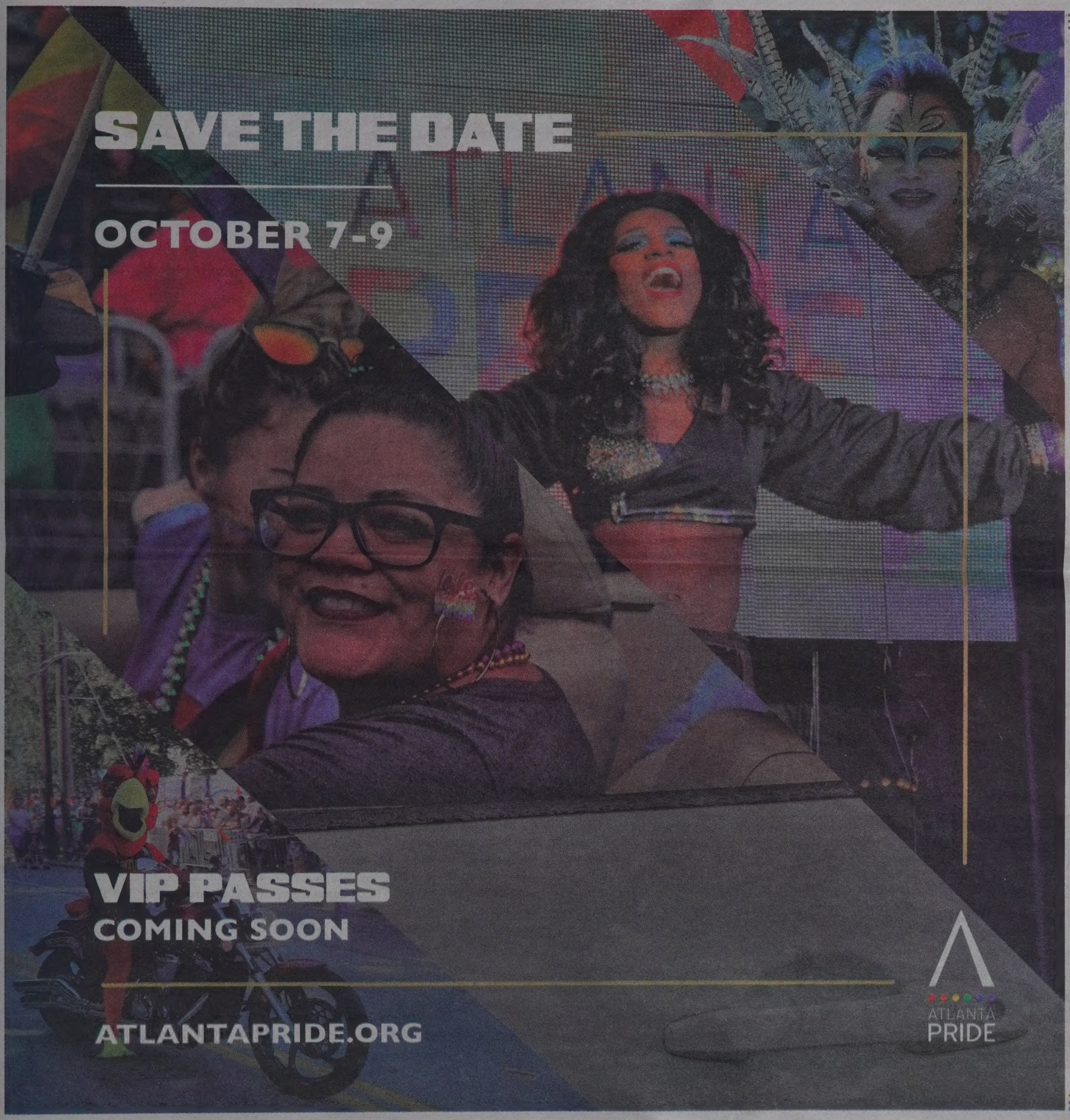
Party buses depart from The Starling at noon sharp. *Learn more at atlantaprideweekend.com.*

Annual All White Party

September 5, 10pm to 3am

Opium

Learn more atlantaprideweekend.com.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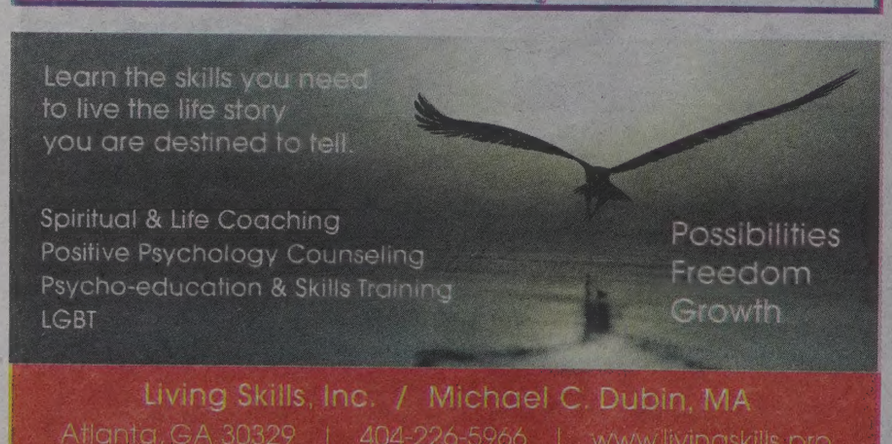


PURE HEAT FESTIVAL CELEBRATES TEN YEARS

Katie Burkholder

This year, the Pure Heat Community Festival celebrates a decade of unity in Piedmont Park on September 4.

The festival is part of Atlanta's Black Gay Pride weekend, celebrated every year during Labor Day weekend. The event is one of the largest Black LGBTQ events in the nation, attracting more than 140,000 attendees. While the festival officially started in 2012, thousands flocked to the park on the Sunday during Labor Day weekend to celebrate Black Gay Pride for years before.

"People always come to the park on Sunday [during Black Gay Pride] and we saw it as an opportunity to not only provide entertainment and also HIV testing, but also expose the community to the community on many levels," Bishop O.C. Allen, founder and senior pastor of The Vision Church, told *Georgia Voice* after the inaugural festival in 2012.

For ten years, Pure Heat has been a gathering rooted in camaraderie, fellowship, and support, highlighting business, professionals, individuals, and charitable pursuits in the LGBTQ and allied communities. The free event brings together Atlanta's Black LGBTQ community through competition, entertainment, and education to oppose prejudice, foster community, spread education about the cultural heritage of Atlanta's Black and brown LGBTQ community, and encourage LGBTQ people to live openly and proudly. In partnership with The Vision Community Foundation, a portion of the proceeds from the event will go to aid the homeless LGBTQ youth and others affected by HIV/AIDS.

The free event will include food vendors, dance competitions, giveaways, live hair battles, and entertainment from local performers and celebrity guests. Past featured guests and artists include Angelica Ross, Da Brat, Brandy, Monica, and Kelly Price.

> ***"People always come to the park on Sunday [during Black Gay Pride] and we saw it as an opportunity to not only provide entertainment and also HIV testing, but also expose the community to the community on many levels."***
>
> ***— Bishop O.C. Allen, founder and senior pastor of The Vision Church***

While this year's full lineup of guests has not yet been announced, one guest at this year's festival will be Joseline Hernandez, a former star on "Love & Hip-Hop: Atlanta."

Hernandez came out as bisexual this year during Pride month on social media, tweeting, "My gayness is like my skin color! Proud #bi girl! Finally comfortable in my #skin … May you all be as comfortable and open as I am one day!"

Known as "The Puerto Rican Princess," the Afro-Latina musician recently came to Atlanta with her Cabaret Tour, performing with the top four dancers from her reality competition show, "Joseline's Cabaret: Atlanta." She also recently released a music video for her newest single, "Ghetto Fantasy."

Pure Heat is only a highlight of an extensive lineup of Atlanta Black Pride Labor Day Rock events backed by Traxx Girls and RockStars Production. Other events include day and night parties throughout the weekend, an influencer dinner, booze cruise, and more. *Find more events on page 12 and online at atlantaprideweekend.com.*

Pure Heat will be held at Piedmont Park from noon to 8pm on Sunday, September 4. To learn more, visit pureheatcommunityfestival.com.

ATLANTA BLACK PRIDE FASHION SHOW TO FEATURE QUEER DESIGNER

The Thrift Jesus

Divine Ikpe

On September 2, Atlanta Black Pride is hosting a fashion show showcasing local Black queer designers along with local LGBTQ Greek organizations. The show, which is chaired by new board member and friend of *Georgia Voice* Tiana Clay, promises to be a diverse and incredible event.

"This fashion show is going to rock your socks off," Amber Moore, the COO of Atlanta Black Pride, told *Georgia Voice*. "You're going to see transgender people, gay men, lesbians, studs. You're going to see a reflection of that in the artists and designers, in the crowd, in the entertainment, in the models."

One of the featured designers in the show is Alexandria, more commonly known as The Thrift Jesus. She is a self-taught designer who has been in the industry for the past three years. She participated in last year's fashion show and she said it was such an encouraging and supportive atmosphere that she happily accepted the offer to be in it for a second time.

Eras that influence The Thrift Jesus' work are ones where Black excellence and beauty were the blueprint of the fashion at the time, such as the '70s, '90s and early 2000s. Some brands that inspire her work are streetwear brands Fear of God, Chrome Hearts, and Pyer Moss, as well as Hanifa, a fun, colorful brand with sexy, yet eccentric clothes that have modern silhouettes with a '70s flair. These inspirations should come as no surprise if you look through her body of work. Her earlier designs could be best described as regal, but this upcoming collection is a full 180-degree turnaround, with a "streetwear meets thrift shop" vibe.

As a bisexual woman, her queerness influences her designs as well; she creates with inclusivity in mind.

Alexandria, more commonly known as The Thrift Jesus. PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

"I am aware of different body types and how people want to be represented through their look," she told *Georgia Voice*. "Style [serves as] a freedom of expression, especially for the queer community. I just want to make the community proud by creating designs that make them feel unique and powerful."

Alexandria's love of secondhand and vintage clothes helped ignite her brand. As the name The Thrift Jesus suggests, sustainability is an important aspect of the brand. She is a fan of secondhand shopping and vintage clothing due to the creativity of the designs and the quality of the clothes themselves, and she tries to incorporate those vintage sentiments into the brand as much as she can.

You can buy her clothes through pop-ups around the city, but in the past her work has been featured in The Pink Zebra in Little 5 Points, Merge Co. at Phipps Plaza, Mutiny Artwrx at the MET Atlanta, Citizen Supply in Ponce City Market, and at her website, thethriftjesus.com (which is currently under construction, but will be complete by winter). She is currently looking into commercial property in Midtown to open her own boutique, so be on the lookout! You can follow her on Instagram @thethriftjesus and on Facebook to get updates about all of her drops, pop-up appearances, and updates regarding her potential future boutique.

"I am aware of different body types and how people want to be represented through their look. Style [serves as] a freedom of expression, especially for the queer community. I just want to make the community proud by creating designs that make them feel unique and powerful."

— The Thrift Jesus

The advice she has for other Black queer people interested in getting into fashion design is, "to find your voice and project it through your designs. Tell a story with each collection and never allow people who don't understand your vision to be the ones who destroy your confidence. You aren't for everyone, and that's okay."

Atlanta Black Pride's fashion show will be held at 120 Ralph McGill Blvd from 7–9pm. To learn more, visit atlantablackpride.org.

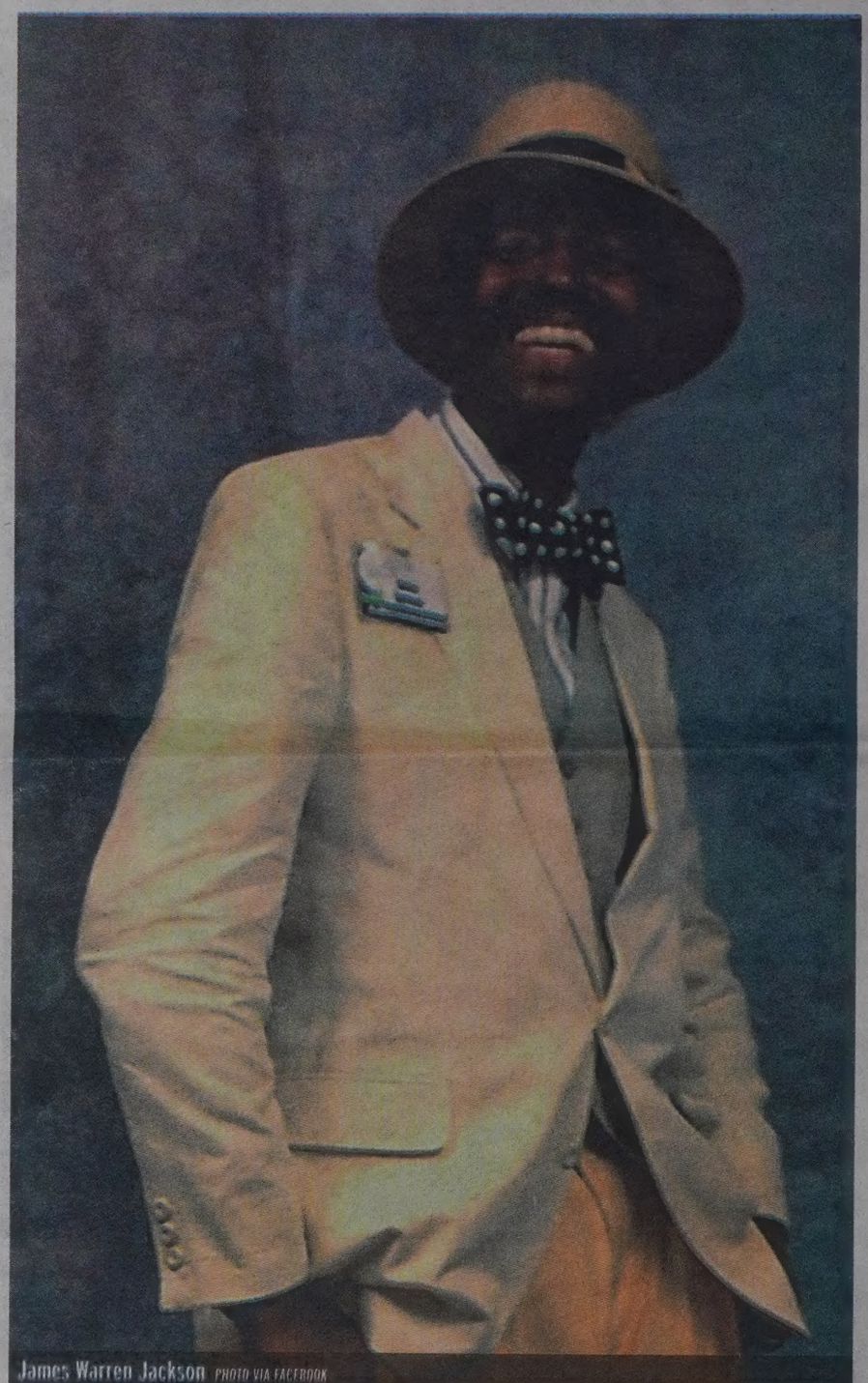
JAMES WARREN JACKSON

& An Earlier Atlanta Black Gay Life

THE ATLANTA COMMITTEE, THE ROSE ROOM & MOREHOUSE COLLEGE (BEFORE LORETTA'S)

Craig Washington

This is the second article from "Reclaiming Our Time: A History of Atlanta's Black LGBTQIA Life," a series of editorials that presents vivid and personal accounts of one of the city's most definitive communities.



James Warren Jackson PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

James Warren Jackson is a Black gay man born in Atlanta in 1946. He and his family lived in the Herndon Homes, a housing project built expressly for Black tenants in 1941. His dad worked as a janitor at Atlanta Public Schools, while his mom worked as a housewife and later became a substitute teacher, also at APS.

"It was enough," Jackson recalled, "because we didn't know there was anything more."

He remembers his childhood as pleasant and uplifting, with very little exposure to the world beyond Southwest Atlanta. When he was around 11 years old, he and his mother were riding a local bus and as white passengers boarded, she directed him toward the back of the bus. Not recognizing what one had to do with the other, he questioned why. His mother gently responded, "You don't understand now, but you will when you get older."

On his first day of fifth grade, as he headed out for class, his mother advised, "That's how girls carry their books." He quickly corrected his stance and lowered the books to his side. "As soon as I got outside," he recalled with laughter, "I held those books so tight to my chest and kept moving." Both of the separate worlds he occupied jointly insisted that he perform silence and submission long before he realized he was a natural threat to each one's order.

"I never thought we would have a Black president or that the Supreme Court would legalize gay marriage in my lifetime."

None of the adults he knew ever discussed homosexuality in front of him or other kids. Race discrimination and other social unrest of the day were not spoken about in his home. He experienced his first erotic interaction with another boy in a darkened sixth grade classroom. While viewing a film, students were paired up, and after the lights came down, his partner Johnny "started feeling my legs and my private parts, and I was not displeased." Throughout high school he did not dare act on his feelings and was never approached.

"You would be exposed, and they would call you 'sissy,' 'punk,' and 'faggot,'" he said.

Eventually, Jackson discovered other young gay men like him among fellow students at Morehouse College. "Not only did I find out I was not the only one, there were so many, I never dreamed," he said, laughing aloud. It was at Morehouse where he found his first sense of community and lifelong friends with whom he could fully be himself. He attended Morehouse from 1966 to 1970, a time shortly before the Stonewall Riots. This was years before watering holes like Fosters, Loretta's, and Traxx gave Black gays in Atlanta welcoming space and respite from the shady white bars that discriminated against them with unchecked regularity. They had the Marquette, however, a now-iconic dive that was within walking distance from the college. Their favorite option was

CONTINUES ON PAGE 17